HIGH END STUDIOS

The Server Owner's 25-Point Launch Audit

FREE EDITION — the exact launch-readiness audit from the Server Launch Playbook. Score yourself before you announce a date.

A DIVISION OF HIGH END ENTERTAINMENT LLC

VERSION 1.0 · 2026

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Most server launches don't die from bad ideas. They die from operations nobody planned: the crash at hour two, the mod who went rogue, the 40 curious visitors who came once and never returned.

This is the exact launch-readiness audit from our full **Server Launch Playbook** — free, complete, no strings. Score yourself honestly before you announce a date. Each item is pass/fail — "mostly" is a fail. Items marked **[RED LINE]** are non-negotiable: **do not launch until every red-line item passes.**

Technical (6 items)

1. **[RED LINE] Stability under load.** The server has run a stress test at 150% of your expected day-one peak concurrent players for at least 60 minutes without a crash or severe degradation.
2. **[RED LINE] Backup and restore verified.** You have taken a full backup (world/database/configs) *and successfully restored it* to a test environment. An untested backup is not a backup.
3. **Restart procedure documented.** Any staff member with access can execute a clean restart from a written one-page procedure in under 5 minutes.
4. **Automated crash recovery.** The server process auto-restarts on crash, and someone gets an alert (ping, message, email) when it happens.
5. **Connection info locked.** The address/invite players will use is final and will not change. Changing it post-announcement loses players permanently.
6. **Performance baseline recorded.** You know your normal tick rate/latency/resource usage at idle and under test load, so you can recognize "abnormal" on launch day.

Content & Gameplay (5 items)

1. **[RED LINE] The first 30 minutes are designed.** A brand-new player who joins alone has an obvious first goal, a way to learn the rules, and something rewarding to do within their first half hour — without a staff member holding their hand.
2. **New-player onboarding path exists.** Spawn/entry area, starter guide or tutorial, and clearly posted rules are all in place and tested by someone who has never seen the server.
3. **Two weeks of content runway.** You have enough features, areas, events, or progression live at launch that an active player won't "finish" everything in week one.
4. **Economy/progression sanity-checked.** Whatever your progression or economy is, you've tested that a determined player can't break it in the first 48 hours (duplication, infinite loops, instant max-out).
5. **The "empty server" experience is acceptable.** Join your server alone at 3 a.m. Is it still worth playing? If the answer is "only fun with 20+ people online," fix that before launch — your first weeks will have quiet hours.

Staff & Operations (5 items)

1. **[RED LINE] Minimum staffing secured.** At least 3 people (including you) have committed in writing to specific launch-day and launch-week shifts. A solo launch is a coin flip.

2. **Roles and permissions assigned.** Every staff member knows exactly what they can do (kick, mute, ban, restart, edit) and their permissions match — no one has powers they haven't been trained on.
3. **Moderation escalation ladder written.** A one-page document defines: warn → mute/timeout → temp ban → permanent ban, with examples of what triggers each step. Staff have read and acknowledged it.
4. **Staff dry run completed.** Staff have rehearsed launch day (see T-minus-3) including at least one simulated incident.
5. **Decision authority is clear.** Staff know who makes the call when you're asleep, and what decisions must wait for you.

Community Infrastructure (5 items)

1. **[RED LINE] Community hub is live and structured.** Your chat community (whatever platform) exists with: welcome/rules channel, announcements, general chat, help/support, bug reports, and a staff-only channel. Channels are few and purposeful — 8 empty channels look worse than 4 active ones.
2. **Rules published in plain language.** Short, specific, human. Not a legal wall. Players can read them in 90 seconds.
3. **[RED LINE] Founding-member program running.** You have at least 15 of your target 25 founding members recruited (Section 3) before the launch date goes public (the T-7 announcement).
4. **Announcement templates drafted.** Launch announcement, delay announcement (yes, draft it — hope you never post it), and first-week event posts are written *before* launch day.
5. **Feedback pipe exists.** There is one obvious place players report bugs/suggestions, and a visible habit of staff responding there within 24 hours.

Legal & Safety (4 items)

1. **[RED LINE] Age and safety policy set.** You have decided and published a minimum age, your policy on harassment and hate speech, and how players report other players — and staff are trained to act on reports.
2. **Data handling stated.** If you collect anything (accounts, IPs, payment info, application forms), a short plain-language notice says what you collect and why. If you take money, you comply with the payment platform's terms and applicable consumer law.
3. **Monetization reviewed against platform rules.** If you plan to sell anything, you've read the relevant game's/platform's terms on monetization and your plan complies. Do this *before* launch, not after your first sale.
4. **Ownership continuity.** At least two trusted people can access critical accounts (hosting, domain, community server) if you're unreachable. Credentials stored somewhere safer than "my head."

Scoring: 25/25 is launch-ready. 22–24 with all red lines passed: launch, and fix the gaps in week one. Any red-line failure: move the date. A two-week delay is forgotten in a month; a broken launch is remembered forever.

Failed some items? That's the point.

Every item you just failed is a solved problem. High End Studios builds complete, copy-paste operating systems for serious community operators:

System	What it solves
Server Launch Playbook	This audit is Section 1 of 11. The rest: a T-minus-14-days calendar, hour-by-hour launch runbook, founding-member engine, and a 30-day growth plan — every template already written.
Community Operations Manual	Items 12–16 forever: 4-tier staff ladder, recruitment kit, moderation playbook, six crisis runbooks.
Economy Design Kit	Item 10 at professional depth: faucets/sinks math, payout tables, anti-exploit forensics.
Community Brand Identity Kit	Look like the big leagues before day one: naming, palettes, Discord architecture, social kit.
Roleplay Framework Pro	For serious RP: complete rulebook, whitelist system, factions, governments, storyline engine.

Find the full catalog: search "High End Studios" on your marketplace of choice.

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